

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

ACDA-05 SAJ-01 AGR-05 EB-07 /087 W

----- 088118

R 111010Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1631

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, GDR, UR

SUBJECT: GDR OBSERVANCE OF OCTOBER REVOLUTION ANNIVERSARY

SUMMARY

GDR OBSERVANCE OF THE 58TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR OFFICIAL COMMENTARY ON THE SOVIET-GDR FRIENDSHIP TREATY AND FOR ABRASIMOV REMARKS ON WEST BERLIN AND SOVIET AGRICULTURE.

ABBREVIATED VERSIONS OF SPEECHES BY

ABRASIMOV AND SED POLITBURO MEMBER HARRY TISCH, WHICH APPEARED IN NEUES DEUTSCHLAND (ND), BETRAY GDR SENSITIVITY REGARDING PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF NEW TREATY AND OFFICIAL CONCERN WITH AGRICULTURAL PROBLEM RESULTING FROM THIS YEAR'S POOR HARVEST IN BOTH COUNTRIES. END SUMMARY

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1. THE GDR LEADERSHIP MARKED THE 58TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION ON NOVEMBER 6 BY SENDING A LONG CONGRATULATORY TELEGRAM TO THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP AND BY SPONSORING A GALA RECEPTION AT THE STATE OPERA IN EAST BERLIN WITH SPEECHES BY POLITBURO MEMBER HARRY TISCH AND SOVIET AMBASSADOR PYOTR ABRASIMOV. THE SOVIETS IN TURN GAVE AN EMBASSY RECEPTION FOR THE EAST BERLIN DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND HELD A SOLEMN MILITARY CEREMONY NOVEMBER 7 AT THE SOVIET MEMORIAL IN TREPTOW PARK.

2. GDR CELEBRATIONS PROVIDED AN OCCASION FOR COMMENTARY ON THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED SOVIET-GDR FRIENDSHIP TREATY. HONECKER'S TELEGRAM TO BREZHNEV REFERRED TO THE "QUALITATIVELY HIGHER STAGE" OF SOVIET-GDR RELATIONS AND HIGHLIGHTED THE FURTHER DRAWING TOGETHER OF THE PEOPLES OF BOTH COUNTRIES AS THE CENTRAL POINT OF THE TREATY. SPEAKING AT THE STATE OPERA CEREMONY, TISCH PAID HOMAGE TO THE "INDESTRUCTIBLE BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP" BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE GDR AND NOTED THAT THE RECENTLY SIGNED TREATY REFLECTED A GROWING LEVEL OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AS WELL AS RECENT POLITICAL CHANGES IN EUROPE AND THE WORLD. HE CHARACTERIZED THE TREATY AS POINTING THE WAY TO INCREASED COOPERATION TO THE YEAR 2000 AND BEYOND AND CONCLUDED THAT THE DOCUMENT, ALONG WITH THE GDR'S 1974 CONSTITUTION, LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE FURTHER FORMATION OF THE GDR'S "DEVELOPED SOCIALIST SOCIETY" AND PAVED THE WAY FOR A GRADUAL TRANSITION OF COMMUNISM IN THE GDR. HOWEVER, TISCH SAID MORE IN HIS SPEECH THAN ND CLOSE TO PRINT. EMBOFF WHO HEARD THE SPEECH WAS STRUCK AT THE TIME BY TISCH'S ANECDOTE ON PUBLIC RECEPTION OF THE TREATY. "WHEN THE GDR WORKER WAS ASKED "IS THIS A GOOD TREATY?", TISCH HAD SAID, "HE ANSWERED "YES, IT IS A GOOD TREATY". THIS SECTION OF TISCH'S ADDRESS WAS NOTICEABLY ABSENT FROM THE TEST PUBLISHED BY ND ON NOVEMBER 7.

3. ABRASIMOV STUCK TO PLATITUDES IN HIS REMARKS ON THE TREATY BY ECHOING THE HONECKER TELEGRAM. FOR ABRASIMOV, THE CORE OF THE TREATY CONSISTED OF THE FURTHER DRAWING TOGETHER OF THE TWO COUNTRIES AND THEIR PEOPLES AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STRENGTHENED THE POWER AND UNITY OF THE SOCIALIST SYSTEM.

4. ABRASIMOV ALSO TOUCHED ON WEST BERLIN AND SOVIET AGRICULTURAL POLICY IN HIS SPEECH. REFERRING TO THE QA AS THE "FOUR POWER AGREEMENT" ON WEST BERLIN, ABRASIMOV WARNED THAT ALL ATTEMPTS-HOWEVER "CLUMSY AND CRASS"- TO UNDERMINE THE AGREEMENT'S CENTERPIECE, NAMELY THAT WEST BERLIN DOES NOT BELONG TO THE FRG AND SHOULD NOT BE

GOVERNED BY IT, HAD BEEN REBUFFED NOT JUST BY THE SOVIET UNION BUT BY THE GDR AND OTHER SOCIALIST STATES AS WELL. THE SOVIET UNION ADVOCATED THAT ALL SIDES OBSERVE THE LETTER AND SPIRIT OF THE AGREEMENT.

5. ON AGRICULTURAL POLICY, ABRASIMOV PRAISED SUCCESSFUL HARVESTS BETWEEN 1971 AND 1974 AND NOTED THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD DONE EVERYTHING NECESSARY NOT JUST TO MEET DOMESTIC DEMAND FOR GRAIN BUT ALSO TO AID ITS SOCIALIST BROTHERS IN SATISFYING THEIR AGRICULTURAL NEEDS. HE WENT ON TO STATE THAT THIS HAD BEEN POSSIBLE ONLY UNDER A SOCIALIST ECONOMY. WHILE THE ND VERSION OF ABRASIMOV'S REMARKS STOPS HERE, HE IN FACT HAD GONE ON TO ADMIT THAT "UNFORTUNATELY, THIS YEAR'S HARVEST WAS SUBSTANTIALLY DECREASED BY BAD WEATHER" AND EMBOFF PRESENT AT CEREMONY PICKED UP TONE OF DEFENSIVE OVERSTATEMENT IN HIS REMARKS INDICATING SENSITIVITY TO KINKS IN SOVIET AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM AND RESULTANT NEED TO IMPORT GRAIN. THE FACT THAT THE EAST GERMANS CHOSE NOT TO PRINT THIS SECTION OF ABRASIMOV'S SPEECH IS A FURTHER INDICATION OF SOVIET AND GDR SENSITIVITIES ON THIS POINT.

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IO-10 ACDA-05 AGR-05 EB-07 /087 W

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6. AMBASSADOR AND MRS. COOPER ATTENDED THE SOVIET EMBASSY RECEPTION ON NOVEMBER 6 AND WERE MET AT THE ENTRANCE BY SOVIET COUNSELOR GROMYKO WHO SAID " I AM TO ATTEND YOU DURING THE RECEPTION" AND ACCOMPANIED THEM THROUGHOUT THE EVENING. THEY WERE ESCORTED THROUGH THE GUEST IN THE RECEPTION ROOM TO THE AREA WHERE HONECKER, SINDERMAN,

STOPH AND OTHERS WERE DRINKING TOASTS RATHER LOUDLY AND WITH AN OCCASIONAL SHOUT. AFTER A SHORT INTERVAL, ABRASIMOV APPROACHED AND, AFTER AMBASSADOR COOPER EXTENDED CONGRATULATIONS ON THE DAY, PROPOSED A TOAST "TO OUR TWO COUNTRIES". ON LEAVING GROMYKO EXCORTEED AMBASSADOR AND MRS. COOPER TO THE DOOR AND EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE RECENT ADMINISTRATION CHANGES IN WASHINGTON, SAYING, WITHOUT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESPONDING, "THIS IS NOT A TIME TO TALK ABOUT THESE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CHANGES, BUT THE PRESIDENT HAS THE RIGHT TO APPOINT HIS OFFICIALS."

8. ON NOVEMBER 7, THE SOVIETS PUT ON THEIR OWN SHOW AT THE SOVIET MEMORIAL AT TREPTOW PARK IN EAST BERLIN WITH A SOLEMN MILITARY CEREMONY ATTENDED BY HIGH SOVIET MILITARY OFFICERS, THE EAST BERLIN DIPLOMATIC CORPS, AND A MERE HANDFUL OF GDR GUESTS HEADED BY POLITBURO MEMBER WERNER KROLIKOWSKI. TO THE STRAINS OF A DIRGE PERFORMED BY A SOVIET MILITARY BAND, THE PROCESSION WOUND ITS WAY THROUGH THE PARK TO THE MASSIVE STATUE OF A SOVIET SOLDIER CRADLING A CHILD IN HIS ARMS, A BROKEN SWASTIKA AT HIS FEET, WHERE THE WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY TOOK PLACE. BEFORE THE ASSEMBLED CROWD, ABRASIMOV, KROLIKOWSKI, AND SOVIET GENERALS INVANOVSKI AND MEDNIKOV CLIMBED THE STEPS OF THE MONUMENT AND DISAPPEARED INTO A SMALL OPENING IN THE BASE OF THE STATUE WHERE THE WREATHS WERE LAID, LEAVING DIPLOMATIC GUESTS BELOW TO STARE UP AT THE IMPOSING STATUE AND THE AUTUMN SHY UNTIL THE OFFICIAL PARTY RE-EMERGED A FEW MINUTES LATER. A SOVIET HONOR GUARD THEN PARADED PAST WITH A NOTICEABLE LACK OF PRECISION THAT CONTRASTED MARKEDLY WITH THE STUNNING DISCIPLINE OF GDR TROOPS AT PREVIOUS TREPTOW CEREMONIES.

8. COMMENT: GDR SENSITIVITIES REGARDING BOTH PUBLIC RECEPTION OF THE NEW TREATY AND AGRICULTURAL DIFFICULTIES ARE REVEALED BY THE CENSORING OF THE TISCH AND ABRASIMOV SPEECHES. THE ABBREVIATED VERSION OF THE ABRASIMOV SPEECH LEAVES THE EAST GERMAN PUBLIC WITH THE FALSE IMPRESSION THAT THERE IS NO AGRICULTURAL PROBLEM IN THE GDR OR SOVIET UNION THIS YEAR. REFERENCES BY TISCH AND ABRASIMOV TO THE 1975 TREATY CONTAIN NOTHING NEW AND CONTINUE TO STRESS THE DRAWING TOGETHER OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE GDR AT ALL LEVELS. A NEW MEMBER OF THE SED POLIBURO AND HEAD OF THE FDGB, TISCH HAS TAKEN ON A MORE ACTIVE PUBLIC ROLE LATELY AND MAY BE A FIGURE TO WATCH IN THE SED POWER STRUCTURE.COOPER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ALLIANCE, AGREEMENTS, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, CENSORSHIP, COMMEMORATIVE CELEBRATIONS, SPEECHES, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BERLIN06674
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750391-0933
From: BERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751156/aaaabxsa.tel
Line Count: 234
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 APR 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <01 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GDR OBSERVANCE OF OCTOBER REVOLUTION ANNIVERSARY SUMMARY
TAGS: PFOR, GC, UR, (ABRASIMOV, PYOTR), (TISCH, HARRY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006